

# **THESIS**

**Niina Kansanaho 2013**

## **PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENTS OF ROVANIEMI UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES ON THE BRAND OF FAZER FOOD SERVICES**



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Thesis

**PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENTS OF ROVANIEMI  
UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES ON THE BRAND  
OF FAZER FOOD SERVICES**

Niina Kansanaho

2013

Commissioned by Fazer Food Services

Supervisors Teija Tekoniemi-Selkälä and Jenni Pyhäjärvi

The thesis can be borrowed.

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The aim of the study was to detect the perceptions of students of Rovaniemi University of Applied Sciences on the brand of Fazer Food Services. The goal of the study was to present Fazer Food Services areas of development to better their brand image.

The author used quantitative research method by familiarising herself with brand theory and conducting an online survey among four campuses of Rovaniemi University of Applied Sciences. The two campuses with the highest response rate were chosen for analysis; Rantavitikka and Ounasvaara campuses.

The analysis revealed similarities in the students' brand perception on Fazer Food Services and Fazer Food Services' desired brand image. Areas of redevelopment include improving the appearance of food, reorganising the layout of the restaurant and improving the customer service quality.

The study was successful at detecting the perceptions of students on the Fazer Food Services brand and also provided aspects for improvement for the company.

**Key words** brand, branding, brand perception, brand image

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<b>Toimeksiantaja</b>	Fazer Food Services		
<b>Työn nimi</b>	Rovaniemen Ammattikorkeakoulun opiskelijoiden mielikuvia Fazer Food Servicesin brändistä		
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Tutkimustyön tarkoituksena oli selvittää Rovaniemen Ammattikorkeakoulun opiskelijoiden brändimielikuvia Fazer Food Servicesistä. Tutkimustyön tavoite oli tarjota Fazer Food Servicesille parannusehdotuksia, jotta opiskelijoiden brändimielikuva mukailisi Fazer Food Servicesin tavoitebrändimielikuvaa.

Tutkimusmenetelmäksi valittiin kvantitatiivinen tutkimusmenetelmä suuren opiskelijamäärän vuoksi. Tutkimustyö koostui bränditeoriaan tutustumisesta, web-kyselyn suorittamisesta ja tulosten analysoinnista. Web-kysely koostui taustatiedoista, ruoan ja ruokailutilan ominaisuuksista ja asiakaspalvelusta. Analyysiin valittiin kaksi kampusta, joilla oli korkein vastaajamäärä: Rantavitikka ja Ounasvaara.

Analyyssissä ilmeni että, opiskelijoiden brändimielikuva vastaa osittain Fazer Food Servicesin tavoitebrändimielikuvaa. Kehityskohteiksi nousivat ruoan ulkonäön kohentaminen esteettisemmäksi, ravintolan pohjasuunnitelman uusiminen tai uudelleenjärjestäminen ja asiakaspalvelun laadun parantaminen.

Kirjoittaja onnistui tutkimustyössään selvittämään opiskelijoiden brändimielikuvan Fazer Food Servicesistä ja tarjoamaan parannusehdotuksia Fazer Food Servicesille kohentamaan brändimielikuvaa.

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

In spring of 2013 Fazer Food Services operated restaurants on four campuses of Rovaniemi University of Applied Sciences. The author discussed with the restaurant manager Outi Kaisanlahti of Viirinkangas campus' restaurant Hilla in autumn 2012. Kaisanlahti was concerned that the brand Fazer Food Services strives to project does not match with the students' perception of the brand. Therefore the aim of the thesis project is to identify the perceptions of the students on the brand of Fazer Food Services and suggest improvements for Fazer Food Services to improve their brand image among students.

The author has been interested in brands since spring 2011 when she started working in a Finnish design company with a distinctive brand. Since then she started thinking about other companies' brands. The thesis project offers the author a chance to study and understand branding.

In this thesis project the author will discover the current brand perception of students of Rovaniemi University of Applied Sciences on the brand of Fazer Food Services. The author uses quantitative research method in the thesis project. A quantitative research is conducted by an online survey sent to students of Rovaniemi University of Applied Sciences. Analyses of the answers are used to suggest improvements for Fazer Food Services to improve their brand image. The thesis project is important since Fazer Food Services operates restaurants all around Finland.

In the thesis project the survey is delivered to students of four out of five campuses. The students of the participating four campuses pay for their lunch and other purchases in the campus restaurant, whereas the students in the fifth campus do not. Therefore the brand perception of the students paying for their food can be different to the students eating for free. The answers of the survey constitute the general opinion of students concerning the Fazer Food Services brand.

## **2 BRANDING**

### **2.1. History of Branding**

“The word ‘brand’ is derived from the Norse word ‘brands’, meaning ‘to burn’. Branding, in this form, has been used for thousands of years to denote ownership or origin.” Branding was originally used on farm animals and slaves to identify their owners, but until the early 19<sup>th</sup> century it was also used as a symbol of shame on fugitives, gypsies, vagabonds, thieves and religious maniacs in the United States of America. Some cultures still use branding as tribal decorations. (Davis–Baldwin 2005, 18.)

The concept of department stores started the competition between different suppliers. This started the branding phenomenon in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Mass production led to technological development and ultimately defined people according to their purchase decisions. (Davis–Baldwin 2005, 18.)

Brands were a common phenomenon by the 1950s. The economic boom and television advertising brought brands closer to consumers. With more companies’ products on offer the consumers would base their purchase decision on the company brand. In the 1990s the concept of branding spread beyond the production industry to service and technology industries with brands such as Microsoft and Apple. By mid 1990s branding was introduced to politics and charities. (Davis–Baldwin 2005, 18-20.)

### **2.2. Components of Branding**

Before branding, there has to be a product; a tangible product that has a purpose or a function. The product should offer a consumer a solution to a need or a problem and it should match the consumer’s expectations on the product.



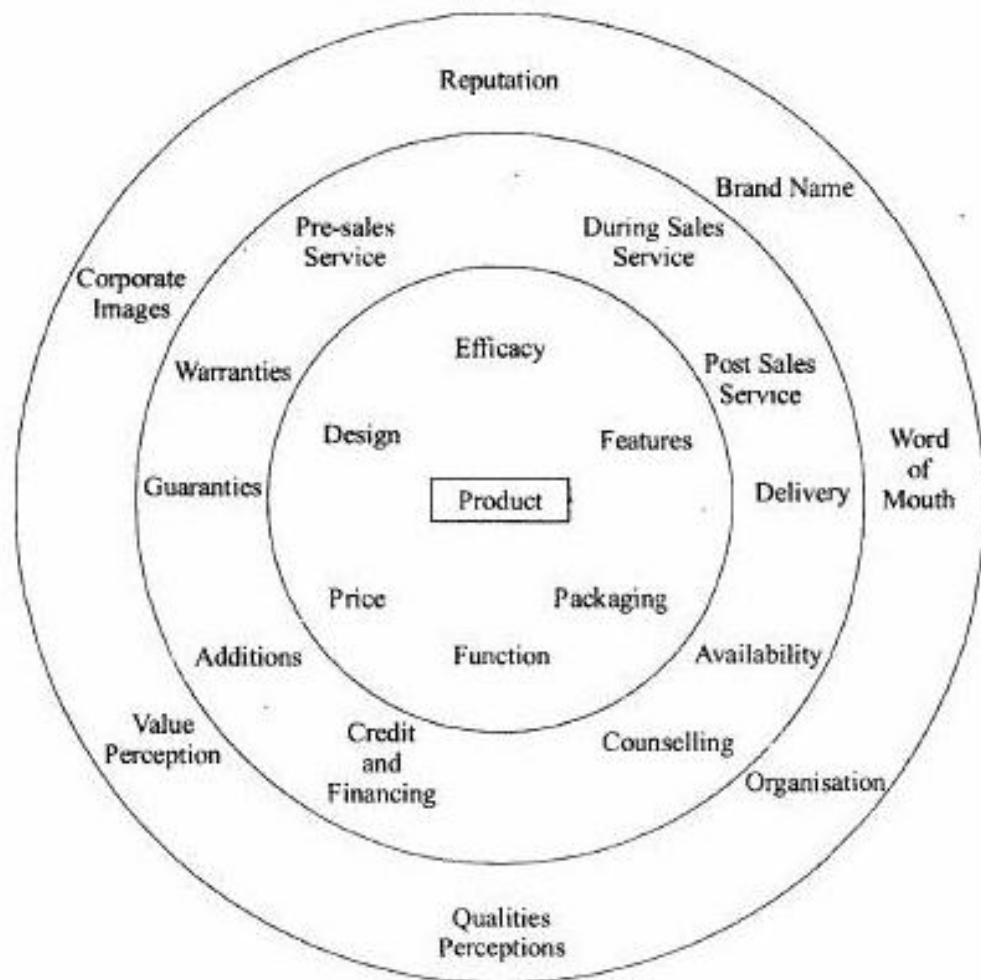


Figure 1: Concept of a Product

(Chunawalla, 2009, 3.)

The product has a design and features. In Fazer Food Services case the product is food designed to feed the students. The food is delivered to customers in a package or in the case of school restaurants; on food serving lines.

Beyond the core components of a product there are added qualities such as guarantees, service and availability. In the restaurant or service industry these qualities include for example customer service, product information, nutrition guidance and availability of food and service. Beyond these added qualities there are perceptions, expectations and reputation; all dealing with company brands. The customers have perceptions on the company which

are formed by experiences, word of mouth and marketing. All components from tangible to intangible form the company brand.

The seller or manufacturer of a product is identified by its brand. A brand name is a combination of letters, numbers or words to represent the company and its products. Companies may also use a brand mark which can be, for example, a symbol or a unique font representing the brand name. The brand name and mark should be memorable and recognizable. (Chunawalla 2009, 4.)

The slogan of a company allows it to verbalize the essence of the brand in an effective, memorable sentence (Mallik 2009, 6). The slogan should represent what the company strives to offer the customers without specifications; for example Fazer Food Services' slogan 'Tasty every day' promises food that tastes good every day.

For a brand to be successful and respected, branding is necessary to develop a deeper value for the brand itself. Physical characteristics can easily be copied but brands are unique. If a consumer does not find any differentiation between two offerings by different companies, the product is called a commodity in which case the consumer bases the purchase decision on price and availability. To turn a commodity into a brand the company needs to invest in packaging and promotion: value is added to the product and usually the value added is emotional, promising something extra to the consumer. Turning a commodity to a brand can happen in stages from a commodity to a functional brand to a high value added brand into a premium product. (Chunawalla 2009, 4-7, 10-14.)

Brand equity is the value formed over time by its audience's perceptions, expectations and experiences on the brand itself. Brand equity can be observed from a financial perspective and a marketing perspective. From a financial perspective a brand produces profit by sales numbers. When a brand is dominant in the market space the company is able to raise prices and cut marketing costs. From a marketing perspective brand equity means consumer perception. A company with high brand equity has loyal customers

and high quality products. It also has a distinct image and position in the market place. It is important to monitor the company's brand equity constantly. Reacting to possible variables concerning brand equity can determine if the brand sustains its added value. Brand equity is built with investing on manufacturing and marketing. (Chunawalla 2009, 25, 220-221.)

Chunawalla (2009, 26) describes brand image as 'the perception of the brand resulting from brand knowledge and brand experience'. It is shaped by brand identity which separates the brand from other brands. It shapes the consumers' perception of the brand and therefore leads to brand image. Furthermore, it leads to brand preference and brand loyalty: the consumers' decision to choose the same brand over and over again. Brand values increase the perceived value to the customer. These values form the connection between the company and the customers.

Brand image can be built and increased with packaging, promotion and customer service. It coincides with words and images consumers have when mentioning a brand. (Mohsin 2009, 98.) Consumers tend to choose brands whose brand image matches their desired self-image. Therefore, companies should invest in detecting their target customers' self-image and reflect the same in their brand. (Chunawalla 2009, 166.)

Brand awareness is achieved when a consumer remembers a brand. However, there are different reasons for a consumer to remember a brand; a consumer may only recognize the name of the brand, remember it from past experience or they are loyal to the brand. Recognizing a brand without past experience means the company has invested in marketing to position themselves on the consumers' minds. Even though a consumer remembers a brand, it does not indicate a strong brand. Some brands can be dominant in their product offering; in computer technology IBM dominated as a brand in consumers' minds long before for example Apple or Toshiba. Whatever the reason for a consumer to be aware of a brand, the more awareness a brand has, the greater equity it has. (Chunawalla 2009, 223.)

Brand tone implies how the brand communicates to consumers, similar to how a person would communicate to others. The tone of your voice, the way you talk or look like and who you associate yourself with leaves an impression on people. The tone of a brand comes across in design, service offering and language used. (Davis–Baldwin 2005, 86.)

Brand positioning represents the placement of a brand in its product category in the consumers' minds. Companies strive to be the number one choice for the consumer. Successful brand positioning is being the favourite choice for a consumer when purchasing specific products. Brand positioning requires investing in designing the product offering to project core ideas the brand wants to represent. (Chunawalla 2009, 201.)

Each brand represents a culture, whether it's the company's country of origin or the culture they want to represent. Fazer Group (2013g.) represents a family-run company with strong Finnish traditions. Fazer Food Services offers responsible food with 60-70 % domestic ingredients (Fazer Group 2013h.).

### **2.3. Brand Management**

Brands are no longer only for multinational companies: wherever there is a competitive marketplace, there are brands. When the differences in price and features are few for a desired product, the consumer chooses the product they feel is the most reliable. The company's brand sets expectations for its products and acts as a synonym for the business. But the company brand not only represents the business; it gives grounds for the employees working in the company. Constant brand activity is needed to maintain the company's brand image. Through brand campaigns companies can promote sales and raise awareness of the company and its values. It can cost millions to build a brand and maintain it, but it only takes one mistake to taint it. (Davis–Baldwin 2005, 26.)

Brand management is used to increase the perceived added value of the brand to the customer. Brand management is linked to marketing and using different marketing techniques to increase the perceived added value.

‘Marketers see a brand as an implied promise that the level of quality people have come to expect from a brand will continue with future purchases of the same product’. As the brand equity is increased by brand management, the companies can raise the prices of their products. The increase in brand value also increases sales. Therefore, the market value of the company is often based on its brand equity. (Mallik 2009, 9.)

Davis and Baldwin (2005, 74) describe branding as

‘a marketing discipline and the basics of branding are common to all areas of marketing: define your audience, know your market, differentiate yourself, choose a route to market and then make your brand stand out.’

Brand building starts with a definition of its position on the market and how it desires to be perceived. Brand values form the basis for the company brand.

The modern society is full of choices and it has made consumers make decisions based on their emotions rather than the physical qualities of a product. The consumer can see a status associated with a brand or they may be fascinated by the design. It can however be solely based on the practical use of the product or the excellent service experienced. Whatever connects the consumer to the product or service, the most successful brands in the world are aware of the power of emotion towards brands. Companies that only offer a simple product or service may have difficulties in connecting an emotion to their brand marketing. A common practise in trying to evoke emotions to the product is simply adding emotional verbs to sales pitches. However, it is the behaviour and the way the brand “speaks” to consumers that evoke emotions towards it. (Davis–Baldwin 2005, 74.)

In the core of branding is a story, or a narrative. Stories connect people from all countries, generations and cultures. The goal of the company can be simplified to one story and the designer translates that story to visual characteristics accompanying the company values. The environment affects the consumer perception of a brand. Politics, economy and cultural trends

can influence consumers' buying behaviour and perception of a certain brand. For example, some of the biggest brands from the United States of America such as Coca-Cola and McDonald's declined in sales outside the US since the war in Iraq, whereas new alternative brands from Islamic cultures have been presented. Furthermore, if the company has an international audience, it should take into account the international context: what works in one country, may not work in another. The environment in which the consumer experiences the brand can vary depending on the context: an online buyer is likely to have a different experience than a consumer in a retail space. (Davis–Baldwin 2005, 80-81.)

#### **2.4. Commissioner: Fazer Food Services**

Fazer Food Services is a part of the Fazer Group family business. Karl Fazer started the business by opening a confectionery shop in Helsinki, Finland in 1891. The company operates in two business areas: Fazer Food Services and Fazer Brands. Fazer Food Services offers dining options from cafeterias and restaurants in schools, companies and public buildings to catering at large events and parties. From famous confectionery products to bakings and chewing gum Fazer Brands offers delicious food recognized around the world. Fazer operates in Finland, Sweden, Russia, Estonia, Norway, Denmark, Latvia and Lithuania but also exports to over 40 countries. The turnover in 2012 for Fazer Group was 1,676.4 million euros. (Fazer Group 2013a, 2013b, 6.)

Fazer bases their success on the company's mission, vision and values. Fazer strives to be 'the leading food and service company on defined markets' and grow all their businesses building on their brands. The goal is to be the stakeholders' first choice and attract as an employer. Fazer has three values: passion for customer, quality excellence and team spirit. Fazer focuses on their customers by giving them excellent service and exceeding expectations. High quality is present in all Fazer products and services and constant improvement in operations is valued. Team spirit manifests in the

way the employees work to gain the customers' trust and common goals of the business. (Fazer 2013c.)

### **2.5. Fazer Food Services: Tasty Every Day**

Fazer Food Services provides jobs for approximately 4100 professionals in the restaurant industry. Fazer-owned restaurants can be found in schools, companies and public buildings. Fazer also provides food services at events and organizes parties. (Fazer 2013d.) The Fazer Food Services brand constitutes of three customer promises: 'friendly and reliable service, delicious food and functional service solutions'. (Fazer Group 2013e.)

Fazer Food Services describes its staff as friendly. They are considered flexible and considerate of special needs and wishes. They work in cooperation with their client organizations to determine the service and product selection. Service is always said to be available to the customer. Considering restaurants in schools and company buildings Fazer Food Services focuses on tasty and healthy lunch. Breakfast and coffee service is also provided along with snack and take-away products. The slogan for Fazer Food Services, 'Tasty every day', also applies to other Fazer Food Services operated restaurants. Service solutions are discussed with client organizations to plan a functional dining hall and an effective kitchen. Fazer Food Services also provides nutrition guidance along with providing healthy options for customers. (Fazer Group 2013f.)

Fazer Food Services restaurants in universities offer students a range of delicious and versatile lunches which nutritionally provide a balanced meal to maintain energy for the whole day. The dining hall is homey and comfortable providing the students a chance to enjoy their coffee either on place or elsewhere. (Fazer Group 2013f.)

### **3 PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENTS OF ROVANIEMI UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES ON THE BRAND OF FAZER FOOD SERVICES**

#### **3.1. Research method and respondents**

Fazer Food Services provides students the opportunity to give feedback daily by feedback forms in the restaurant. Fazer Food Services provides its employees yearly job satisfaction research of which results are used to improve the employees' work environment and methods. Fazer Food Services provides no brand-based research results on the company website.

In Theseus database there is a research project closely related to branding and Fazer Food Services: The Visibility of the Brand in Fazer Cafés. The thesis introduces the Fazer cafés and its products as brand extensions and studies if the Fazer Group brand is visible in the cafés (Kukkanen–Leppiaho 2013). Kukkanen and Leppiaho's thesis differs in theme and research to this thesis process even though both include the term branding.

When starting a research project, one should start with the end result: what you want to achieve. Once you know what you want to achieve, you decide what area to study. (Rugg–Petre 2006, 61-62.) In this study the author wanted to find out if the students' perception on Fazer Food Services is the same as Fazer Food Services wishes it was. The research method is chosen next. The best practise for this study considering the large amount of students was to conduct an online survey. The questions were designed together with Fazer Food Services restaurant manager Outi Kaisanlahti.

This thesis project is an analytical research project using quantitative research method: a survey is conducted to detect the current opinions and perceptions on the food offering and service of Fazer Food Services and the results are used to suggest improvements for Fazer Food Services. The author uses quantitative research to analyse the current status of students' perception on the Fazer Food Services brand. Quantitative research measures quantities or amounts to generate data for analysis. (Kothari 2004, 2-5.)



Quantitative research consists of research methods that gather data in quantities. The numbers represents the general phenomenon among a sample group. (American Intercontinental University 2012).

The author conducted the survey among four campuses of Rovaniemi University of Applied Sciences. The survey was created in Webropol and distributed by email during May 2013. The survey was divided into three parts: background information on the respondent, perceptions on food and perceptions on the staff and restaurant premises of Fazer Food Services. The survey consisted of multiple choice questions, open-ended questions and grading questions.

The number of students present during spring 2013 was 2882 of which 199 were non-Finnish. The author conducted the survey in Finnish and in English. Only 24 English responses were collected and therefore cannot be used to analyse the results as a single response group. Therefore the results of the survey are based on the Finnish responses. The response rate for Finnish speaking students was about 13 %.

The first part of the survey deals with background information. The respondents answer questions about their age, gender and country. They also answer questions concerning their studies including the campus they study at and semesters attended in University of Applied Sciences. The respondents also answer a question on how often they use the services of Fazer Food Services and if they have any special needs concerning their diet.

In the second part of the survey the respondents answer questions concerning their opinion on the food at Fazer Food Services. The questions deal with food selection, taste and appearance of food.

The third part of the survey the respondents answer questions concerning their opinion on the staff and premises of Fazer Food Services. The respondents describe the staff, food serving line, dining area and return point. The last question is if they recommend Fazer Food Services to others.

The survey was delivered to students in four campuses: Ounasvaara, Viirinkangas, Rantavitikka and Santasport Institute.

Table 2: Number of Responses between Campuses, N = 365

<b>Campus</b>	<b>Responses (N)</b>
Viirinkangas	80
Santasport Institute	21
Rantavitikka	168
Ounasvaara	96

The author chose the two campuses with the highest response rate for analysis. The highest response rate with 168 responses was Rantavitikka campus. The second highest response rate with 96 responses was Ounasvaara campus. The campuses with lower response rates are not utilized in the analysis since the low number of responses cannot be generalized to represent the campus in question.

### **3.2. Responses from Rantavitikka campus**

The highest response rate for the questionnaire came from Rantavitikka campus with 168 responses. Out of the 168 responses almost 55 % were between 18 and 25 years old. 26 % were between 26 and 35 years old, 11 % between 36 and 45 years old and 9 % were over 46 years old. 53 % were female and 47 % male.

26 % of the respondents from Rantavitikka campus have attended Rovaniemi University of Applied Sciences for 1 or 2 semesters. 34 % have attended 3 to 4 semesters and almost 20 % have attended 5 to 6 semesters. 20 % of the respondents have 7 or more semesters attended in Rovaniemi University of Applied Sciences.

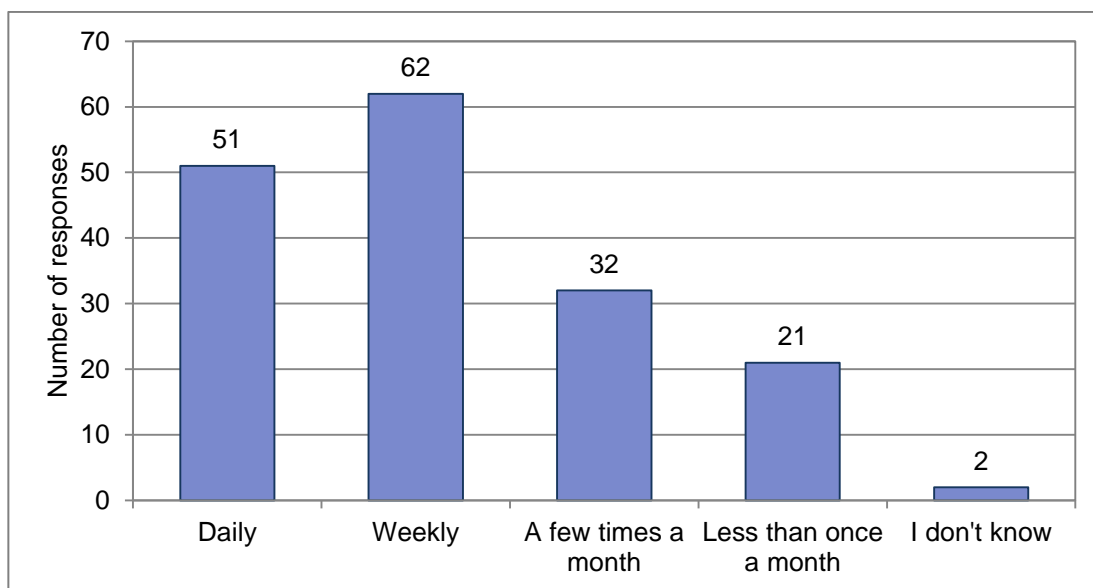


Figure 2: Frequency of Using Services at Fazer Food Services, N = 168

Most of the respondents have attended Rovaniemi University of Applied Sciences for one or two years and are active students using the services of Fazer Food Services either on a daily or weekly basis. This background information provides a trust-worthy base for analysis since most responses represent the answers of regular customers rather than less frequent customers.

22 of the respondents have mentioned a special need or wish in their diet. 15 of these prefer no-lactose or low-lactose foods. Two people eat gluten free. The remaining five special needs diets contain vegetarian, food allergies and local food. The respondents were asked if they wanted more selection at Fazer Food Services restaurants. Almost 55 % answered no, and 45 % said yes.

The students were asked to describe the appearance of the food in Fazer Food Services restaurant. They could use up to six words, either positive or negative or both. 165 students answered the question giving altogether 240 words describing the appearance of the food. The words were divided into three categories: positive, negative and neutral. 42 % of all words given were positive. 23 % of all words given were neutral and 34 % negative.

The top five positive words were good (N = 29), colourful (N = 19), tempting (N = 12), delicious (N = 12) and versatile (N = 5).

The top five neutral words were OK (N = 25), ordinary (N = 8), normal (N = 7), standard or basic food (N = 6) and reasonable (N = 4).

The top four negative words were messy (N = 11), mushy (N = 10), untempting (N = 8) and factory-like (N = 5).

The overall opinion concerning the appearance of food is positive. The most mentioned words include: good, OK, colourful, tempting and delicious. Five people mention the food being versatile. These positive words match with Fazer Food Services' brand as they describe their lunch as 'delicious and versatile (Fazer Group, 2013f)'. The negative words presented by respondents offer Fazer Food Services an opportunity to better their products. Ordinary, standard and normal are neutral words presented by students; these words could be explained by all the respondents being Finnish. Fazer Food Services being a Finnish company, some of the dishes are very traditional Finnish.

The students were asked to describe the taste of the food at Fazer Food Services restaurant. They could use up to six words, either positive or negative or both. 164 students responded to the question giving altogether 338 words describing the taste of the food. The words were divided into three categories: positive, neutral and negative. 36,7 % of all words given were positive, 26,8 % were neutral and 37 % were negative.

The top four positive words were good (N = 42), tasty (N = 21), versatile (N = 14) and healthy (N = 5).

The top four neutral words were inconsistent or varied (N = 19), basic (N = 18), ordinary (N = 7) and OK (N = 5).

The top five negative words were bland (N = 43), too spicy (N = 11), factory-like (N = 8), strange combinations (N = 6) and boring (N = 6).

Opinions on the taste of food are more critical. With 43 mentions 'bland' is the most used word to describe the taste of food at Fazer Food Services. On the other hand, there is almost the same amount of mentions of 'good'. As opinions on taste are quite subjective, it is inevitable that there are differences. Fazer Food Services' slogan 'tasty every day' is met with 21 mentions of 'tasty'. The interesting word to appear is 'inconsistent'; the taste of food varies between days sometimes being good and sometimes bad.

The students were asked to describe the staff at Fazer Food Services restaurant. They could use up to six words, either positive or negative or both. 164 students responded to the question giving altogether 306 words to describe the staff. The words were divided into two categories: positive and negative. 78 % of all words given were positive and 22 % were negative.

The top five positive words were friendly (N = 52), nice (N = 42), good customer service (N = 36), smiley/happy (N = 24) and professional (N = 9).

The negative words presented freely by students include off-putting (N = 17), ok (N = 14) and busy (N = 5).

Considering the staff at Fazer Food Services there is an overwhelming amount of positive opinions. As Fazer Food Services describes their staff as providing 'excellent service and exceeding expectations (Fazer Group 2013c)' there are similar opinions among students describing the staff as friendly, nice and providing good customer service with a smile. However, there are 17 mentions of staff being rude or off-putting. This gives Fazer Food Services a chance to make service even better. It is important to maintain a positive attitude even if one is having a bad day, or is busy with work.

The students were asked to choose words from a given list of adjectives to describe the food serving line. They could choose up to four words including one that they could write freely. 168 students answered the question.

Table 3: Words to Describe the Food Serving Line of Fazer Food Services Restaurant, N = 168

<b>word</b>	<b>number of hits</b>
clear	122
tidy	101
organised	60
clean	42
tempting	24
disorganised	20
messy	9
dirty	1
something else, what?	10

The words presented freely by students include disorganized return point, insufficient, slow, empty, modern, short, unpractical and OK.

The overall opinion on the food serving line of Fazer Food Services restaurant is positive. The respondents consider the food serving line to be clear and tidy, which implies the staff at Fazer Food Services is doing a good job at keeping it clean and functional. The respondents also regard the food serving line to be tempting, which is important in creating good first impressions.

The students were asked to choose words from a given list of adjectives to describe the dining space of Fazer Food Services restaurant. They could choose up to four words including one that they could write freely. 168 students answered the question.

Table 4: Words to Describe the Dining Space of Fazer Food Services Restaurant, N = 168

<b>word</b>	<b>number of hits</b>
tidy	89
cramped	59
comfortable	50
relaxed	48
clear	47
spacious	37
homey	5
dirty	3
something else, what	10

The words presented freely by students include boring, factory-like, dreary, restless, school diner and resonant.

The respondents describe the dining space of Fazer Food Services with mostly positive words. They see it as tidy and comfortable, though cramped. The dining space is also considered to be relaxed, clear and spacious. Cramped and spacious representing opposites it is interesting how both words were used by many respondents. This contradiction could be explained if certain respondents only sit in certain areas of the dining hall which could be more cramped than other areas. On the other hand, it could depend on the time of dining. During lunchtime the dining space can feel cramped when the space is full of hungry students, but visiting the restaurant outside lunchtime there is usually more empty seats and therefore more space.

The students were asked to grade the return point of Fazer Food Services restaurant on three aspects: location, cleanliness and functionality. 168 students answered the question.

Table 5: Grading of the Fazer Food Services Restaurant Return Point, N = 168

	1	2	3	4	5	in total	Average
<b>Location</b>	6	23	38	72	29	168	<b>3,57</b>
<b>Cleanliness</b>	3	14	49	79	23	168	<b>3,63</b>
<b>Functionality</b>	11	37	55	57	8	168	<b>3,08</b>
<b>in total</b>	20	74	142	208	60	504	3,42

*1 = poor, 2 = passable, 3 = satisfactory, 4 = good, 5 = excellent*

Considering the return point of the Fazer Food Services restaurant the overall opinion is satisfactory. The location is considered to be good. The return point of food can be a challenge to keep clean at all times but students consider it clean. Regarding functionality of the return point there is a slight decrease in the grade: students consider it satisfactory.

The students were asked if they would recommend Fazer Food Services to others and 84,5 % said yes. Recommendation of a restaurant indicates high satisfaction on the overall experience.

### 3.3. Responses from Ounasvaara campus

The second highest response rate for the questionnaire was from Ounasvaara campus with 96 responses. From the 96 respondents over 86 % were female and over 13 % male. Almost 46 % of the respondents were between 18 to 25 years old. 26 % were between 26 to 35 years old, only 10 % were between 36 to 45 years old and almost 18 % were over 46 years old. Most of the respondents from Ounasvaara campus have studied in Rovaniemi University of Applied Sciences for two to three years or more.



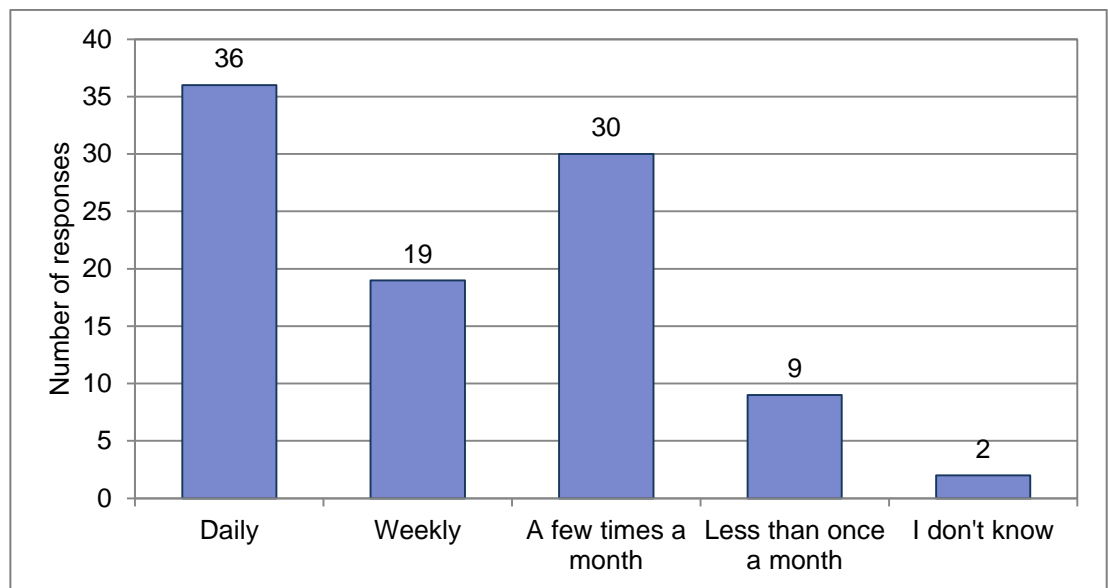


Figure 6: Frequency of Using Services at Fazer Food Services, N = 96

37,5 % of the respondents use the services at Fazer Food Services on a daily basis. About 19,8 % use the services on a weekly basis. Therefore over 57 % of the respondents are frequent customers at the Fazer Food Services restaurant and provide a trust-worthy basis for analysis of responses.

22 respondents mention a special need or wish in their diet. 12 prefer a no-lactose or low-lactose dishes, 4 eat vegetarian and one prefers fish and chicken dishes. Other special needs include fish allergy, organic food, gluten-free and light dishes.

The students were asked to describe the appearance of the food in Fazer Food Services restaurant. They could use up to six words, either positive or negative or both. 96 students answered the question giving altogether 145 words describing the appearance of the food. The words were divided into three categories: positive, negative and neutral. 50,3 % of all words given were positive. 15,9 % of all words given were neutral and 33,8 % negative.

The top five positive words were good (N = 15), tempting (N = 12), colourful (N = 10), good/fresh-looking salads (N = 6) and delicious (N = 5).

The neutral words include ordinary with ten mentions and ok with six mentions.

The top five negative words were vague/indefinable (N = 11), unappetising (N = 8), colourless (N = 8), varied (N = 4) and factory-like (N = 3).

The overall opinion on the appearance of food is positive. The respondents describe the food as good, tempting and colourful. The salad offering of Fazer Food Services got six special mentions considering appearance. As first impressions on food tend to rely on appearance, it is important that the students consider it to look appetising.

The respondents are all Finnish and it may have an effect on how they consider the food to look like. As there were ten mentions of the food looking ordinary, it could be explained by the fact that the respondents are Finnish. However, Fazer Food Services have theme weeks when they concentrate on specific cultures and their dishes. So the respondents regarding the food as ordinary may suggest that the themes have not been carried out successfully.

Some respondents had negative opinions on the appearance of food. 11 students find the food indefinable: they cannot tell what the food contains. There were also mentions of food not looking appetising or colourful. In the future the restaurant could pay more attention to presentation and consistency to bring out the colours of ingredients.

The students were asked to describe the taste of the food at Fazer Food Services restaurant. They could use up to six words, either positive or negative or both. 96 students responded to the question giving altogether 198 words describing the taste of the food. The words were divided into three categories: positive, neutral and negative. 50,5 % of all words given were positive, 14,1 % were neutral and 35,4 % were negative.

The top five positive words were tasty (N = 25), good (N = 23), versatile (N = 9), healthy/nutritious (N = 8) and well seasoned (N = 7).

The neutral words presented by students were ordinary or basic (N = 18), ok and edible.

The top five negative words were tasteless (N = 28), boring (N = 11), varies by day (N = 10), one sided/unchangeable (N = 4) and factory-like (N = 3).

The overall opinion on the taste of food at Fazer Food Services is positive. The slogan for Fazer Food Services 'tasty every day' is challenged by the respondents from Ounasvaara campus giving 25 mentions of tasty, but 28 mentions of tasteless. However, 23 mentions of good also supports the Fazer Food Services slogan of 'tasty every day'.

The students were asked to describe the staff at Fazer Food Services restaurant. They could use up to six words, either positive or negative or both. 96 students responded to the question giving altogether 210 words to describe the staff. The words were divided into two categories: positive and negative. 91,4 % of all words given were positive and 8,6 % were negative.

The top five positive words were friendly (N = 45), happy/positive (N = 40), good customer service (N = 24), pleasant/nice (N = 21) and professional (N = 11).

The negative words include mentions of stressed, busy, quiet, absent-minded, impatient, frustrated and off-putting.

Over 90 % of the opinions on the staff of Fazer Food Services on Ounasvaara campus are positive. The respondents describe the staff as friendly, happy and professional. They also feel like they get good customer service in the restaurant.

The students were asked to choose words from a given list of adjectives to describe the food serving line of Fazer Food Services restaurant. They could

choose up to four words including one that they could write freely. 96 students answered the question.

Table 7: Words to Describe the Food Serving Line of Fazer Food Services restaurant, N = 96

<b>word</b>	<b>number of hits</b>
clear	58
tidy	55
clean	30
organised	30
tempting	21
disorganised	18
messy	3
dirty	2
something else, what?	11

The words presented freely by students include slow, crowded, long queues, dysfunctional and empty.

The respondents describe the food serving line as clear, tidy, clean, organized and tempting, which all contribute to the first impression of the restaurant. There are seven mentions of the food serving line getting crowded due to the slow movement of queue. This hints at the fact that the layout of the restaurant does not work as it should.

The students were asked to choose words from a given list of adjectives to describe the dining space of Fazer Food Services restaurant. They could choose up to four words including one that they could write freely. 96 students answered the question.

Table 8: Words to Describe the Dining Space of Fazer Food Services, N = 96

<b>word</b>	<b>number of hits</b>
cramped	58
tidy	54
comfortable	19
relaxed	18
clear	15
spacious	12
homey	1
dirty	1
something else, what?	20

The words presented freely by students noisy, factory-like, unpractical, smelly and long queues.

Considering the dining space of the Fazer Food Services restaurant in the Ounasvaara campus, the respondents consider it to be cramped. This opinion was also projected in the question concerning the food serving line. Even though the respondents consider the dining space to be cramped, they find it tidy and comfortable. There are also 10 mentions of the dining space being noisy, which also links to the space being cramped. The closer the students sit to each other, the more noise is produced.

The students were asked to grade the return point of Fazer Food Services restaurant on three aspects: location, cleanliness and functionality. 96 students answered the question.

Table 9: Grading of the Fazer Food Services Restaurant Return Point, N = 96

	1	2	3	4	5	in total	Average
<b>Location</b>	4	11	12	46	23	96	<b>3,76</b>
<b>Cleanliness</b>	0	5	31	47	13	96	<b>3,71</b>
<b>Functionality</b>	7	22	38	25	4	96	<b>2,97</b>
<b>in total</b>	11	38	81	118	40	288	3,48

*1 = poor, 2 = passable, 3 = satisfactory, 4 = good, 5 = excellent*

The overall opinion on the return point is satisfactory. The location was graded the highest getting close to being considered good. The respondents

consider the cleanliness to be good too. However, the functionality of the return point is considered just less than satisfactory.

The students were asked if they would recommend Fazer Food Services to others and 82,3 % said yes.

### 3.4. Comparing Rantavitikka and Ounasvaara

The highest response rate for the questionnaire came from Rantavitikka and Ounasvaara campuses. The analysis of the results was done individually for both campuses. Ultimately there were some similarities in the responses but also some differences.

Table 10: Background Information between Campuses, N = 264

	Rantavitikka, N = 168	Ounasvaara, N = 96
<b>Age</b>	18-25: 55 % 26-35: 26 % 36-45: 11 % 46 → : 9 %	18-25: 46 % 26-35: 26 % 36-45: 10 % 46 → : 18 %
<b>Gender</b>	female: 53,6 % male: 46,4 %	female 86,5 % male:13,5 %
<b>Semesters attended in RUAP*</b>	1-2: 26 % 3-4: 34 % 5-6: 20 % 7→: 20 %	1-2: 19 % 3-4: 27 % 5-6: 29 % 7→: 25 %
<b>How often do you visit FFS**</b>	daily: 30,4 % weekly: 36,9 % few times a month: 19,0 % less than once a month: 12,5 % don't know:1,2 %	daily: 37,5 % weekly: 19,8 % few times a month: 31,3 % less than once a month: 9,4 % don't know: 2,1 %
<b>Diet preferences</b>	no/low-lactose (N = 15) gluten-free (N = 2) vegetarian food allergies local food	no/low-lactose (N = 12) vegetarian (N = 4) fish/chicken fish allergy organic gluten-free light/low fat
<b>Do you want more selection in FFS?</b>	yes: 45 % no: 55 %	yes: 52 % no: 48 %

\*RUAP = Rovaniemi University of Applied Sciences, \*\*FFS = Fazer Food Services

The division between campuses concerning the age of the respondents is similar. Both campuses' biggest response group is the 18 to 25 year-olds. The second biggest is the 26 to 35 year-olds. Therefore, both campuses respondents are mostly young adults.

There is a clearer difference between the gender division in campuses: in Rantavitikka 53,6 % are female, whereas in Ounasvaara 86,5 % are female. Therefore, a definite majority of Ounasvaara's responses on the survey present the opinions of female students.

There is no clear majority of respondents' attended semesters on either campus. On Rantavitikka campus the majority with 34 % are students with three to four semesters attended. On Ounasvaara campus the majority with 29 % have attended five to six semesters. A clear majority on Rantavitikka campus use the services of Fazer Food Services weekly or daily. On Ounasvaara campus the majority of respondents use the services daily or a few times a month. Based on the equal division concerning the semesters attended and the frequency of using the services of Fazer Food Services majority of the respondents are considered regulars.

Both campuses have respondents who prefer no-lactose or low-lactose dishes. On Ounasvaara campus this preference presents 12,5 % of the respondents, whereas on Rantavitikka they represent 8,9 % of all respondents.

On both campuses there is about a half and half division between students who want more selection at the restaurant and those who do not.

Table 11: Comparison between Rantavitikka and Ounasvaara Campuses.  
N = 264

Theme	Rantavitikka, N = 168	Ounasvaara, N = 96
<b>Appearance of food</b>	good, ok, colourful, tempting, delicious	good, tempting, colourful, good salads
<b>Taste of food</b>	bland, good, tasty, inconsistent	tasty, tasteless, good
<b>Staff</b>	78 % positive: friendly, nice, good customer service, off-putting	91,4 % positive: friendly, happy, good customer service
<b>Food serving line</b>	clear, tidy, organised, clean, tempting, disorganised	clear, tidy, clean, organized, tempting, disorganized, crowded/queues
<b>Dining space</b>	tidy, cramped, comfortable, relaxed, clear, spacious	cramped, tidy, comfortable, relaxed, noisy
<b>Return point</b>	location 3,57 cleanliness 3,63 functionality 3,08  = 3,42	location 3,76 cleanliness 3,71 functionality 2,97  = 3,48
<b>Recommendation rate</b>	84,5 %	82,3 %

There were similar opinions concerning the appearance of food in both campuses. Both campuses describe the food looking good, tempting and colourful. Both campuses had split opinions on the taste of food; both campuses had most mentions of the food being bland or tasteless but also good and tasty. The results indicate that there is inconsistency on the taste of food on both campuses.

Both campuses find the staff friendly, happy and good customer servants. However, 17 of the respondents from Rantavitikka campus also mention the staff being off-putting. In the service industry the customer should always receive positive service, no matter how bad the employee's day has been.



Both campuses find the food serving line clear, tidy, clean, organised and tempting. However, the students in Ounasvaara campus find the food serving line in the campus restaurant to get crowded and cause long queues. The dining area in both campuses is found tidy, comfortable and relaxed, however cramped. The Ounasvaara campus also finds its dining area noisy.

The return point received almost the same overall grade in the two campuses. Location was graded 0,19 higher and cleanliness 0,08 higher in Ounasvaara campus, but functionality 0,11 lower than Rantavitikka. Overall there was only 0,06 grade difference between the campuses. Therefore the Fazer Food Services return point overall is considered to be between satisfactory and good.

The recommendation rate in Rantavitikka campus is 84,5 % and in Ounasvaara 82,3 %, both recommendation rates are high in general which indicates that customers are satisfied with their overall service experience with Fazer Food Services.

#### **4 CONCLUSIONS**

The purpose of the study was to detect the perceptions of students of Rovaniemi University of Applied Sciences on the brand of Fazer Food Services. The author conducted an online survey including questions on the background information, food and service of Fazer Food Services. Two campuses with the highest response rates were chosen for analysis: Rantavitikka and Ounasvaara.

The author detected similarities between the campuses concerning the appearance and the taste of food. The appearance of food was considered good, colourful and tempting, whereas the taste of food was considered inconsistent. There were mentions of both good and bad on both campuses' responses. 'Tasty every day' being the Fazer Food Services slogan, it has to

deliver tasty food every day and judging from the responses of the campuses there is inconsistency in the taste day by day.

According to Fazer Group (2013f) 'The staff in Fazer Food Services restaurants maintains a friendly attitude', which is also the respondents' perception on the staff; the students describe the staff as friendly, nice, happy and they receive good customer service. However, there is also an opportunity to improve the service since there were 17 mentions of the staff being off-putting or rude.

The food serving line in both campuses is found clear, tidy, clean, organised and tempting but in Ounasvaara campus the students also found the serving line to be crowded because of long queues. The dining space is tidy, comfortable and relaxed but both campuses find it too crowded and in Ounasvaara campus also noisy.

The return point is graded above satisfactory and the recommendation rate for Fazer Food Services on both campuses was over 80 %.

The study was successful at detecting the perceptions of students on the Fazer Food Services brand and also provided aspects for improvement for the company.

Both Rantavitikka and Ounasvaara campuses found inconsistency in the taste of food. Fazer Food Services needs to focus on consistency and providing tasty food every day. Future study could be conducted on specific dishes that students find tasty or tasteless.

The staff at Fazer Food Services is considered positive and friendly, and the 17 mentions of off-putting or rude can easily be eliminated by staff training. In the training, the staff needs to learn how to project happiness or friendliness despite their own mood or the busy work schedule.

Ounasvaara campus found the food serving line to be cramped due to long queues. A new layout with consideration of repositioning serving areas can solve the problem of long queues. On both campuses, rearrangement of

tables and chairs in the dining area also provides more space for students to walk and dine without distracting noises.

The grading of the return point can be raised by keeping it clean. The functionality was graded low on both campuses, indicating problems regarding the physical aspects of the return point. Fazer Food Services needs to consider if the directions on placement of cutlery, plates and waste are clear and easily accessed.

The technological developments of the past ten years provide companies a new approach to marketing. The internet provides companies an instant platform to connect with customers all over the world. Even service-providers like restaurants who don't sell products on the internet can use it to their benefit to portray their brand, their personality and values to attract customers. (Meyers–Gerstman 2002, 2-3.)

The internet can offer a company a new approach to attract and sustain customers and their relationship but only if the company utilizes it. Nowadays, if you don't appear online you may lose customers rapidly as new brands make a name for themselves. As important as it is to appear online, it is just as important to stand out from others. A customer has more options nowadays than ever before and the opportunity to compare companies and prices can make customers less loyal. (Meyers–Gerstman 2002, 3, 64.)

Fazer Group provides their main website in eight different languages but Fazer Food Services' website only in Finnish and Swedish. Fazer participates in social media by having accounts on Facebook, Twitter and Youtube. A potential customer for Fazer has access to multiple company sites but if only interested in Fazer Food Services, they can access the website only in Finnish or Swedish. Future study could be conducted to detect if more channels are needed for Fazer Food Services' online presence.

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## APPENDIX

## Survey to campuses of Rovaniemi University of Applied Sciences

## Mielikuvia Fazer Food Services-ravintolasta

Fazer Food Services operoi kouluruokaloita Rovaniemen ammattikorkeakoulun kampuksilla. Tämän kyselyn tarkoituksena on kartoittaa mielikuvia Fazer Food Services-yrityksestä opiskelijoiden näkökulmasta. Vastaajien kesken arvotaan Fazer Food Services-tuotepaketti. Vastaukset käsitellään anonymisti ja luottamuksellisesti.

## Taustatietoja vastaajasta

## 1. Ikä \*

☐ 18-25 ☐ 26-35 ☐ 36-45 ☐ 46 tai enemmän

## 2. Sukupuoli \*

☐ Nainen ☐ Mies

## 3. Mistä maasta olet kotoisin?

## 4. Kampus, jossa opiskelen: \*

☐ Viirinkankaan kampus ☐ Urheiluopisto ☐ Rantavitikan kampus ☐ Ounasvaaran kampus

## 5. Montako läsnäolokautta sinulla on RAMK:ssa? \*

☐ 1-2 ☐ 3-4 ☐ 5-6 ☐ 7 tai enemmän

## 6. Kuinka usein käytät Fazer Food Services-palveluita? \*

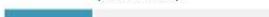
☐ Päivittäin ☐ Viikottain ☐ Muutaman kerran kuukaudessa ☐ Harvemmin kuin kerran kuukaudessa ☐ En osaa sanoa

## 7. Onko sinulla jotain erityistarpeita ruokavalioosi liittyen?

5

6

(Sivu 1 / 3)



## Mielikuvia Fazer Food Services-ravintolasta

### Mielipiteitä ruoasta

#### 8. Haluaisitko enemmän valikoimaa Fazer Food Services-ravintolaan? \*

☐ Kyllä

☐ Ei

#### 9. Kuvaile Fazer Food Services-ruoan makua muutamalla sanalla: \*

Voit käyttää sekä positiivisia että negatiivisia sanoja. (max. 6 sanaa)

5

6

#### 10. Kuvaile Fazer Food Services'n ruoan ulkonäköä muutamalla sanalla: \*

Voit käyttää sekä positiivisia että negatiivisia sanoja. (max. 6 sanaa)

5

6

(Sivu 2 / 3)





## Mielikuvia Fazer Food Services-ravintolasta

### Mielikuvia Fazer Food Services-henkilökunnasta ja ravintolaympäristöstä

#### 11. Kuvaile Fazer Food Services'n henkilökuntaa muutamalla sanalla: \*

Voit käyttää sekä positiivisia että negatiivisia sanoja. (max. 6 sanaa)

#### 12. Millä seuraavista sanoista kuvailisit Fazer Food Services ruokalinjastoa? \*

Voit valita max. 4 sanaa

☐ selkeä
 ☐ sekava
 ☐ houkutteleva
 ☐ siisti
 ☐ liikainen
 ☐ sotkuinen
 ☐ puhdas
 ☐ järjestelmällinen
 ☐ jokin muu, mikä?

#### 13. Millä seuraavista sanoista kuvailisit Fazer Food Services ruokailutilaa? \*

Voit valita max. 4 sanaa

☐ vähyttä
 ☐ rento
 ☐ siisti
 ☐ liikainen
 ☐ selkeä
 ☐ ahdas
 ☐ tilava
 ☐ kotoisa
 ☐ jokin muu, mikä?

#### 14. Minkä arvosanan antaisit Fazer Food Services'n palautuspisteelle seuraaviin asioihin liittyen: \*

1 = huono 2 = välttävä 3 = tyydyttävä 4 = hyvä 5 = erinomainen

	1	2	3	4	5
Sijainti	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Siisteys	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Toimivuus	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

#### 15. Suositteletko Fazer Food Servicesiä muille? \*

☐ Kyllä
 ☐ Ei

#### 16. Jos haluat osallistua tuotepaketin arvontaan, täytä yhteystietosi alla olevaan kenttään (nimi, kampus, sähköpostiosoite)